

Introduction

In June 1996, the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) published the Indiana Wetlands Conservation Plan (IWCP). The IWCP was developed through an extensive process of information gathering, input, and review by a variety of interests across the state. Development was guided by three groups: the Wetlands Advisory Group (people representing diverse stakeholders in Indiana wetlands conservation from environmentalists to county surveyors; from farmers to coal mine operators), the Technical Advisory Team (technical representatives from the state and federal agencies that have regulatory or oversight roles in wetlands conservation), and the Project Reviewers (a group of several hundred stakeholders that was solicited for input on the IWCP by telephone and through the mail throughout the planning process). Overall, more than 900 individuals across Indiana participated in the Plan's development.

The purpose of the IWCP was to achieve wetlands conservation in ways that improve the quality of life in Indiana. The Plan established common ground on which progress in wetlands conservation could be made, and proposed specific actions designed to achieve that progress. Since the Plan's release in 1996, the DNR and its federal, state, and private partners have been working together to implement the strategies identified in the Plan.

Local Input is Critical

Everyone involved in the IWCP planning and implementation process agreed that, in order to be most effective, wetland conservation efforts need to be driven by local people taking local actions in local areas. Toward that end, the IWCP encourages the establishment and enhancement of local *Focus Areas* throughout the state. Focus areas are groups of agencies, organizations, and individuals who are dedicated to conserving wetlands in specific, local areas. A number of successful focus areas already exist in Indiana—several of these are listed as case studies in the *IWCP*.

This Focus Area Sourcebook and Directory was developed to:

1. Enhance the efforts of existing focus areas;
2. Encourage the creation of additional focus areas; and
3. Create a network and directory of focus areas in the state to facilitate communication among and between these efforts.

Many of the concepts and strategies included in this sourcebook were developed and/or implemented in the Limberlost Pilot Focus Area.

The Limberlost Pilot Focus Area Team

Ken Brunswick, Coordinator, Founding member of Limberlost Swamp Remembered
Betty Drinkut, Landowner, College Student, Owner of a restored wetland, Founding member of Limberlost Swamp Remembered
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Lynn W. Burry, Town of Geneva Board
F. Dwane Ford, Indiana Conservation Officer
Marvin Hart, Retired and Limberlost-Hart Outdoor Classroom, Landowner
James Laux, Local Factory Environmental Control Supervisor, Landowner
Dwain Michael, Biology and Environmental Science Teacher, Crop Farmer, Landowner
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Jay Sprunger, Adams County Soil and Water Conservation District, Landowner
Wendy Williams, Boys and Girls Club of Decatur, IN, BS in Natural Resources

How to use this Sourcebook

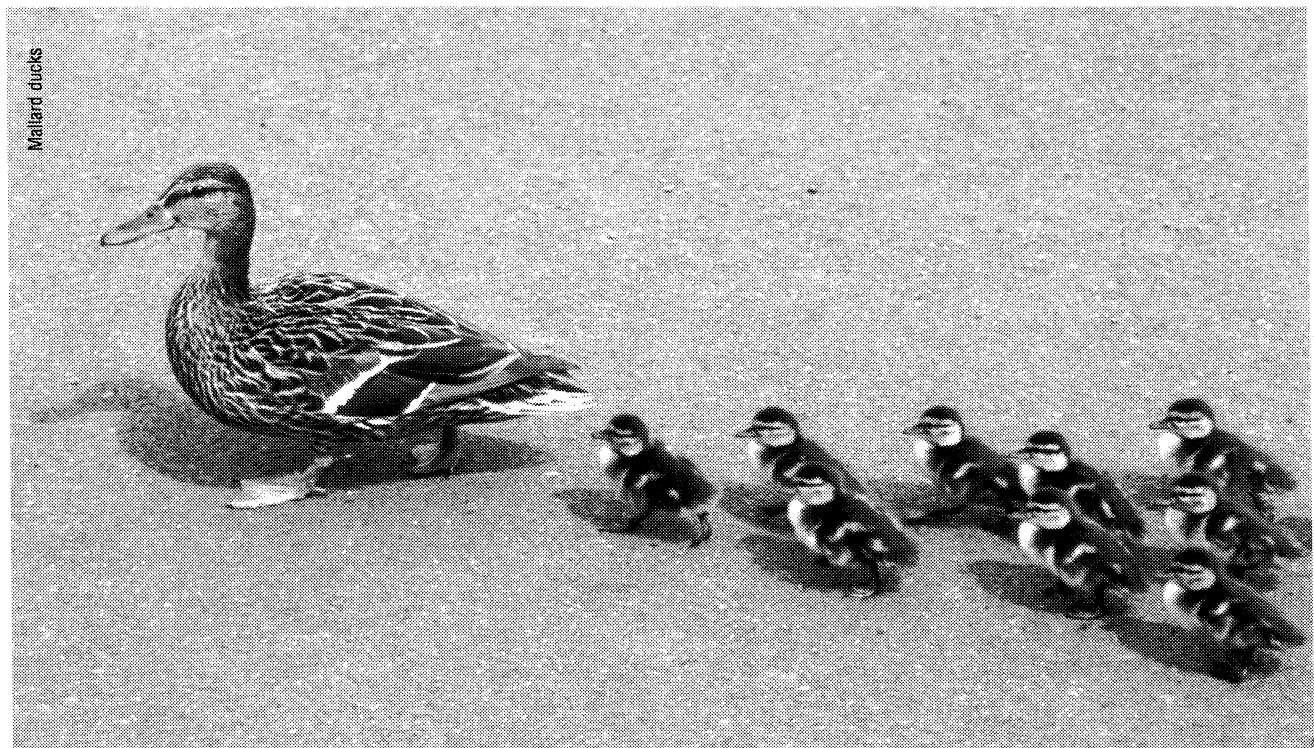
This sourcebook is filled with ideas, lists, and information designed to make the creation and/or enhancement of a local focus area easier. It has been designed specifically for people already involved in focus area efforts and/or people who have an interest in starting a focus area where they live. It outlines a process for bringing together diverse stakeholders who have an interest in conserving community wetlands, and it suggests steps that can be taken to achieve wetland conservation for the benefit of all.

Most of the ideas contained in this sourcebook have been gathered from and tested by successful focus areas already operating throughout the state. However, it is critical to remember that there are many ways to accomplish wetland conservation, and the methods contained herein are by no means the only ways.

The final section of this sourcebook is a directory of many of the focus areas currently operating in Indiana, as well as a list of agencies and organizations that have expertise in wetlands and wetland conservation. Stakeholders interested in starting a focus area are strongly encouraged to contact these resources for ideas, advice, technical assistance, and encouragement.

Sidebars – Experiences From The Pilot Focus Area

As part of the IWCP project, the Limberlost Swamp area in northeastern Indiana was selected to serve as a pilot focus area; to implement and test many of the strategies contained in this sourcebook. Sidebars like this one that describe specific experiences from the pilot focus area appear throughout the text.



Mallard ducks